CARS TASK FORCE

2 October 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Administration

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Acting Chief, Information Services Staff

SUBJECT: Proposed Task Force to Develop CARS

1. This memorandum requests your approval and support to develop a mini task force in order to speed up the development of a Common-use Automated Registry System (CARS). We seek to obtain the temporary services of two qualified individuals to work with the CARS Project

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2. Background

One of the functions which the Records Management Division of ISS is responsible for is to develop policies, procedures, and systems for Agency-wide application to enhance the overall quality of the records management program. To this end, RMD/ISS has been developing The Records Information System (TRIS) for the past two years. Some of the products of this work are seen in ARCINS (Archives and Records Center Inventory System), DARE (Declassification and Review System), and RAMS (Records Center and Archives Records Management System). These systems are already developed and operational or in the process of becoming operational within the next fiscal year. The next step is to expand the scope of The Records Information System into the active inventory control systems currently used by registry managers throughout the Agency. One such technique would be the use of computers for the inventory and control of documents in file folders. At present, these "automated registries" are custom designed to meet the needs of individual components. Already at least three "automated registries" are in operation within the Agency. None of them were developed with the capability to interface with each other and only one to interface with the centralized Agency records system. Unless we are to see further proliferation of such independent systems, the Information Technology Branch needs to get out in front of this effort and develop the functional requirements necessary for a computer application designed

to satisfy the information needs of a typical registry manager. After appropriate data has been collected and analyzed, RMD/ISS will write a Functional Requirements document that will be used as a bench mark in building the Agency computerized registry system. Through commonality of design, data input and retrieval, the Agency automated registries would be much more compatible with each other and would be able to take maximum advantage of the centralized systems now under development in the DDA for records management in the Agency.

3. It is believed that the development of a CARS Functional Requirements document is one of the most important objectives that ISS has for FY 1980. It has, of course, been included in our proposed FY 1980 MBO Program. Since this is true, why do we wish to set up a mini task force to speed up CARS development at this time? Clearly, it represents a change of priority and an increased sense of urgency that we feel is necessary if we are to take the lead in developing an effective and efficient Agency-wide system. We are behind the power curve in our efforts at this time. I have learned that we only have one

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employee,_____ working on this problem and that CARS may only consume about 50 percent or less of his time due to resource constraints. At this level of effort, we will not complete the action proposed by the MBO by the end of FY 1980. What is needed is the temporary detail of two qualified employees for about 180 days. These employees would remain on the T/O of their parent organization and be "loaned" to ISS to work with the CARS Project Manager. Attachment A describes the background and experience we would be looking for in the task force analysts selected for this project. Attachment B is an action plan for how their talents and time will be fully utilized during the period of this detailed assignment.

4. It is believed that this is one of the more important requirements that ISS is facing at the present in the area of records management. In order to avoid cost duplication and the inherent limitations of tailored automated registry systems, while at the same time providing timely policy direction, we need to greatly enhance our overall effort in the development of CARS. With your approval and backing of this request, it is believed that the cooperation of other Office heads may be obtained to support this endeavor through the loan of two employees whose time could be devoted to this task.

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Attachment

APPROVED: _____

10/4/79

_____   _____
Deputy Director for Administration   Date

STAT AC/ISS/[   ]mes (2 Oct 1979)

Distribution:
    Orig - Addressee w/atts to be returned to ISS
       2 - DDA
       1 - C/RMD w/atts
       1 - ISS Chrono

Added distribution:
       1 - D/OCR
       1 - D/ODP

BACKGROUND & EXPERIENCE REQUIRED FOR CARS TASK FORCE

Analysts selected for this project will have a knowledge of the principles and practice of document indexing and abstracting; working experience in the development of the functional requirements of a large scale computer application; and some knowledge of records management and the functions performed by an Agency registry. Each analyst must be able to work independently in conducting surveys in registries throughout the Agency, and must be able to use good judgement and tact in interviewing registry employees who often have heavy workloads and demanding deadlines.

ACTIONS PLAN FOR CARS TASK FORCE

The analysts will participate in determining the common information needs of registry managers, and the functions to be performed by any computer application which is developed to satisfy these needs. The Task Force will do this by:

a. Data gathering.

* Study the information needs of the managers of number of registries in different parts of the Agency. Registries using both manual and automated systems will be surveyed.

* Identify the document and file folder data now collected.

* Identify how these data are recorded, accessed, and used.

b. Analyze data.

* Determine the strengths and weaknesses in the systems studied.

* Identify registry information handling problems and steps that are being taken or should be taken to solve these problems.

* Compare and contrast the designs of the automated records inventory and control systems surveyed, paying particular attention to characteristics which facilitate or hinder the capability of these systems for the interchange of data between one registry and another and between a registry and the centralized records inventory systems under development in ISS.

c. Write requirements.

With the knowledge gained in the above analyses, the analysts will participate in writing a Functional Requirements document that will define the "common" information needs of registry managers, and explain the functions that should be performed by any computer application which is developed to satisfy such needs. This document will serve as a guideline for the development of automated registry systems in the future. Particular attention will be paid to the data elements and data code schemes that should be used in future systems in order to avoid unnecessary imcompatibilities and make maximum utilization of the data collected in these systems.